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RUEHLB/AMEMBASSY BEIRUT PRIORITY 6449  
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RUEHDM/AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS PRIORITY 7308  
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RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY 2283  
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RUEHTU/AMEMBASSY TUNIS PRIORITY 7448  
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 9529  
RUEHJI/AMCONSUL JEDDAH PRIORITY 2269  
RUEHJM/AMCONSUL JERUSALEM PRIORITY 3354  
RHMFISS/CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL PRIORITY  
RHMFISS/COMSOCEUR VAIHINGEN GE PRIORITY  
RHMFIUU/COMSIXTHFLT PRIORITY

UNCLAS TEL AVIV 002720

STATE FOR NEA, NEA/IPA, NEA/PPD

WHITE HOUSE FOR PRESS OFFICE, SIT ROOM  
NSC FOR NEA STAFF

SECDEF WASHDC FOR USDP/ASD-PA/ASD-ISA  
HQ USAF FOR X0XX  
DA WASHDC FOR SASA  
JOINT STAFF WASHDC FOR PA  
CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL FOR POLAD/USIA ADVISOR  
COMSOCEUR VAIHINGEN GE FOR PAO/POLAD  
COMSIXTHFLT FOR 019

JERUSALEM ALSO ICD  
LONDON ALSO FOR HKANONA AND POL  
PARIS ALSO FOR POL  
ROME FOR MFO

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E.O. 12958: N/A  
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SUBJECT: ISRAEL MEDIA REACTION

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SUBJECTS COVERED IN THIS REPORT:  
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Mideast

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Key stories in the media:  
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After several days of relative calm in the confrontations between settlers and Civil Administration inspectors, violence reignited yesterday when Civil Administration inspectors went to Tzofim to enforce the construction ban in West Bank settlements. Tzofim, which Yediot notes is not considered to be an Qideological settlement,

has a mixed secular-religious population and abuts the Green Line to the north of Qalqilya. Civil Administration inspectors, who had come to confiscate heavy machinery that was engaged in infrastructure work on the settlement, were turned away by settlers. The police and Border Police reinforcements were met by a few dozen teenagers and adults, who blocked all access routes to the settlement. At least one of the teenagers on the scene claimed that the violence was started by the police. The violence, which police accuse the settlers of starting, left one Border Policewoman hospitalized in moderate condition. Additionally, at least another two Border Policemen and eleven settlers were also injured. In a related story, Maariv reported that Interior Minister Eli Yishai has instructed his office to expedite the lengthy planning work that precedes construction in West Bank settlements during the ten-month moratorium. The interior minister's goal is to create a situation in which construction can be renewed at an intensified pace once the construction freeze order expires.

In a follow-up to the arrest warrant issued to Tzipi Livni in the U.K. this week, Maariv reports this morning that both Uzi Arad and Naor Gilon from the Foreign Ministry held conversations yesterday with the British ambassador to Israel, in which they underscored Israel's position that the British government needed to take legislative action to prevent the recurrence of such instances. Gilon reportedly indicated that top Israeli officials would boycott Britain until this matter was resolved. In England, British Foreign Secretary David Miliband reportedly told the Israeli ambassador to the U.K. that he, too, believed the situation to be unacceptable and that Prime Minister Gordon Brown held consultations with top cabinet members yesterday on the subject.

In a lengthy interview from Ramallah, HaQaretz this morning is quoting Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas as saying that it is possible to reach an agreement with Israel within six months, but only if Israel enforces a strict freeze of settlement construction for this period. Abbas is also quoted by Israel Hayom today as having said yesterday in Ramallah that the Palestinians would not QacceptQ the Israeli initiative as adequate and, at the same opportunity, added a new condition that would have to be met before the PA would renew talks with Israel: QTalks with Israel will be renewed if the international community recognizes the 1967 borders as the borders of the future Palestinian state,Q said Abbas.

This morning the electronic media reported Iran's claim that it successfully tested a long-range improved version of the Sajil-2 missile. In another development, Yediot quoted foreign media outlets as saying that Israel is operating unmanned naval vessels in the Persian Gulf to spy on Iran.

Yediot reported that Israel and Turkey are secretly coordinating a visit to Turkey by PM Ehud Barak.

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Mideast:  
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Block Quotes:  
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## I. QThe Realist Manifesto

Diplomatic correspondent Aluf Benn wrote in the independent, left-leaning HaQaretz (12/16): QBarack Obama's speech upon receiving the Nobel Peace Prize should be called the Qrealist manifesto.Q The U.S. President summed up his political worldview in seven words: QI face the world as it is.Q Not a messiah, not a prophet and not a dreamer. Rather, a leader who recognizes the limits of human nature and sees statecraft as a power game.... First, he does not see

Israel as an important ally, as did Bush, who viewed it as a partner in the global war on terror. Obama, too, believes in good and evil, but his world is painted in many shades of gray, not black and white. Second, Obama perceives the Israeli-Arab conflict as a struggle for racial and tribal identity, and above all, religious identity. To him, it's a conflict between Arabs and Jews that is only worsening, rather than a political and strategic conflict. Third, he does not rule out a unilateral defensive war, but he will strictly observe the rules of engagement and the Geneva Conventions.... Fourth, and most important, Obama tends toward a gradual peace process whose results would be felt immediately, rather than postponing everything until all problems are solved.... The aspiration toward a final-status agreement does not exist in a laboratory, but in a reality in which facts are being created and the occupation is deepening. Obama understands this and prefers partial steps to waiting for the Big Bang, which may not arrive. So he insisted on a construction freeze in the settlements, even a partial one, and he will support economic peace and another withdrawal from the West Bank. He will not put everything on hold until the conflict is over. And if he remains true to his realist manifesto, he will certainly also support dialogue with Hamas.

## II. The Invoice Will Be Presented to All Israelis

Prominent liberal-centrist playwright Yehoshua Sobol wrote in the independent Israel Hayom (12/16): These days, when the Government of Israel is looking for national priority areas in which to invest our money, it looks as if the first and foremost national priority must be given to quickly and fundamentally handling the firebrands of the mosque of Yasuf -- before hundreds of innocent people pay with their lives the price-tag set by the perpetrators of the next bloodbath.

## III. We're All Tzipi Livni

The conservative, independent Jerusalem Post editorialized (12/16) : British Prime Minister Gordon Brown and Foreign Secretary David Miliband have been sitting on their hands rather than push through legislation that would make it impractical for anti-Zionist campaigners to conduct lawfare against visiting Israeli officials.... Israel's enemies ... come away with a propaganda victory because reports that a high-ranking Israeli [former Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni] was accused of such heinous charges chip away at Israel's legitimacy.... Plainly, Britain so closely identifies with the Arab position on borders, settlements and Jerusalem that it no longer even feigns diplomatic evenhandedness.... Brown twice promised to propose legislation that would hamper lawfare by requiring Her Majesty's Attorney General for England and Wales to approve the issuance of any war crimes warrant. Some suggest Brown and Miliband have purposefully not fulfilled this promise to chastise Israel. Others say they simply lack the political capital to face down their own rabidly pro-Palestinian backbenchers and -- just months before national elections -- do not want to be dependent on the Tories to pass a law. Whatever the explanation, this has not been Britain's finest hour.

## IV. We Must Not Return to the Days of Hypocritical Albion

Veteran journalist and television anchor Dan Margalit wrote in the independent Israel Hayom (12/16) : English law, which allows for the arrest of anyone who played an active role in an armed conflict between countries and groups that have no connection to Britain, is the evolution of an international treaty that urges its signatories to do so [i.e. to make such arrests]. Most signatories have not heeded that entreaty. England did accede and, by so doing, either deliberately or accidentally became a serial harasser of Israel's leadership.... The Israeli leadership is behooved to be careful because, the protests aired by Benjamin Netanyahu and Avigdor Lieberman notwithstanding, it is not at all clear whether they will succeed in persuading the British Government to intervene against the arrests and, even if it should deign to do so, it is doubtful whether it has the authority to impose its will on the independent British courts system. There is only one way to do so, and that is to have the British Parliament establish that those laws are invalid. But given the current atmosphere in London, there is no chance that the government will take that necessary step.... It is not one law or another that, unto itself, makes the difference; rather, it is when it becomes part of a woven fabric along with

other steps by organizations with ulterior motives, which the [British] Government has not taken steps to hinder their access to the courts, academia and the media. Jewish organizations and Israeli citizens find their way into this mesh and serve as an QalibiQ for the Muslims of England to show that the motive for their action is not anti-Semitic. They will always have a Jew and an Israeli from the far Left to count on. As the Bible notes, Qyour destroyers and devastators will come from your own midst.Q Evidence can be found in the generous financial aid that the British Government grants to organizations whose purpose is to impede the governments of Israel, be it the current government, the one before or even the one that served before that.

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